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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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Action
INFORMATION
April 28, 1970

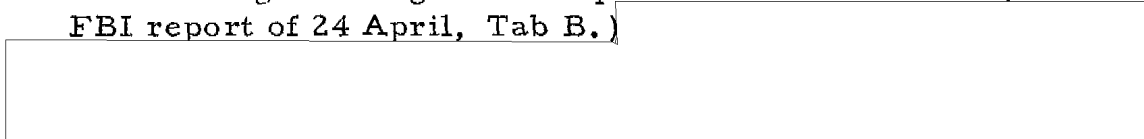
MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky

SUBJECT: Cuban Developments--Some Cause for Concern

The following combination of circumstances raises problems:

- On April 17 Alpha-66, a Miami-based Cuban exile organization, mounted an infiltration raid on Cuba (A CIA report on the operation is at Tab A). This was the first such raid in almost a year, and was relatively successful in that some of the infiltrators survived for a week. It has now been completely crushed. The incident stimulated the exile community in the US, and Alpha 66 has propagandized its activities and begun to organize for possible future raids. (See FBI report of 24 April, Tab B.)



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- A possible hint of Cuban sensitivity to this raid and the level of exile activity was contained in an intelligence report collected by Guantanamo (see Tab C), on April 17, the day of the raid and apparently before the scope of the landing was clear to the Cubans. The report indicated that if the situation "got out of hand" the Cubans might attack the Guantanamo base in retaliation. How accurate this report was is not clear. There is some feeling it may have been deliberately intended to get to us simply as a tactical warning that if the exile efforts succeed the US can expect a confrontation with Cuba (see Comment on report at Tab C).

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- The April 17 raid also occasioned a public blast from Castro, against the United States during a funeral speech for soldiers killed combatting the raiders. It may have influenced a rather significant foreign policy speech given at Lenin Centennial ceremonies in Havana, in which Castro again lashed out at the US, glorified the revolution in Latin America, and said warm things about the Soviets and their leadership in the Communist world.

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- Raul Castro, as Commandant of the Armed Forces, and other high Cuban officials have been touring the Soviet Union the past several days. This follows a visit some weeks ago by the Soviet Defense Minister. Obviously some talks about something related to military matters have been going on, and relations seem warm.
- Two Soviet Bear D naval reconnaissance aircraft flew into Cuba on 18 April and again on 25 April. This is the reconnaissance version of the TU-95 heavy strategic bomber. It appears that these flights are connected with the current Soviet naval maneuver, "Okean" now underway in the North Atlantic. These maneuvers are ending this week-end. It will be interesting to see if the TU-95 flights continue. This is the first time since the missile crisis that Soviet strategic aircraft have been in Cuba.

Castro's rhetoric seems to be an effort to renew the siege mentality in order to revitalize Cuban enthusiasm for sacrifice and excuse domestic problems--an effort that was helped and possibly even occasioned by the exile raid. Increased exile activity could also have been perceived by Castro as a hardening of the US position, and a possible renewal of US supported exile paramilitary activity. He may thus have intended his rhetoric to be a warming to us or an effort to discourage us.

It is not clear what precisely the Cubans and the Soviets are doing in the military field but the Raul Castro visit and the flights of Soviet reconnaissance bombers raise questions as to what the future thrust of Castro's external policy may be, and what he may have been planning when the Alpha-66 activity cut across his vision.

All the foregoing raises the following concerns:

- a) The need for a further assessment of Castro's intentions and the Soviet-Cuban relationship. I am asking the intelligence agencies for their estimates.
- b) The need to decide what we are to do about heightened exile activity. Present activity is a technical violation of US law and of international law. If we disregard it, it may be seen by Castro as a deliberate USG tactic to increase pressure.

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Aside from many other factors, uncontrolled exile activity is an unguided missile; we can find ourselves unwittingly sucked into a confrontation we do not want and are not prepared for.

- c) The need to review contingency plans for something like an attack on Guantanamo. The ones we have are at least three years old. Shouldn't the WSAG look at this?

Yes (Signed) HK
MAY 4 1970
No

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22 April 1970

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : Anti-Castro Exile Operation in Cuba

1. On 17 April 1970, an armed group landed on Cuba's eastern coast about 22 miles east of Baracoa, Oriente Province. The infiltration team, led by Vicente Mendez Fernandez of a Miami-based exile organization (Alpha-66), reportedly had between 13 to 18 members. The Cuban government, in a communique dated 18 April, confirmed that a heavily armed group had landed and had made contact with Cuban security forces. According to the communique two infiltrators were killed and three captured; the remaining members of the group are still at large. Cuban casualties have been thus far listed at 5 dead and 1 wounded.

2. Fidel Castro has become personally involved in the counteroperations. On 19 April, in a speech made at the funeral services for the five Cubans killed, Castro angrily accused the US of supporting the infiltration and of plotting new attacks against his government. Castro also has made an inspection tour of the area where the landing took place and has kept in personal contact with the commander in charge of the operation, Major Raul Menendez. In a press conference held on 22 April, Major Menendez reported that the exile group has been completely encircled by his forces and that "the total extermination of the infiltrators is imminent." Castro is expected to give more details of the operation at a press conference planned for 22 April.

3. Castro's personal involvement is probably due to a variety of reasons. Raul Castro, Minister of the Armed Forces is in Moscow on an official visit, as are several other high-ranking Cuban officials. Also, Castro is probably aware that

Note: This memorandum was produced by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated by the Clandestine Service. It was also coordinated by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

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his charges against the US are untrue and is using them as a means of revitalizing sagging Cuban enthusiasm for domestic programs. He has already branded the incident as "part of the imperialist plan to obstruct our harvest." With the most productive phase of the sugar harvest coming to an end almost two weeks behind schedule, the 10-million ton goal is almost certainly beyond reach. He is again warning the exile community that any future attempts will also be harshly put down. Another factor could be that Castro was surprised by the landing and in view of reports that there were to be other coordinated landings, decided to look personally into the situation.

4. Spokesmen for Alpha 66, which has taken credit for the landing, say that it is not a hit-and-run operation but an effort to establish various guerrilla groups for the purpose of toppling the Castro regime. The latest statement from Alpha 66 demanded support from the US and Latin American countries for their "invasion." They insisted these countries had a commitment to support an internal revolt, the implication being that this was part of their plan. Cuban sources have stated that interrogation of the captured exiles has revealed that they planned to subsist on Cuban soil for 30 days.

5. The infiltrators were apparently transported to Cuba by a shrimp boat, "My Lettie", owned and captained by a Cuban exile who has been involved in similar operations in the past. According to US customs officials in Miami, "My Lettie" departed Miami on 10 or 11 April with 8 men and crew aboard. The craft had a rendezvous with another vessel in the vicinity of the Bahamas (exact location unknown) which was carrying Mendez Fernandez and at least four others. The latter vessel was a 26 foot catamaran probably owned and operated by another Cuban exile; it departed Miami on 12 or 13 April. Both boats returned to Miami on 20 April at which time they were boarded, searched, and subsequently impounded by US Customs officials. Two additional groups apparently were to be infiltrated into Cuba, but the impounding of the boats may have prevented further action by the exiles.

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6. Alpha 66, an anti-Castro group, was organized in May 1962 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Later that year the group joined forces with the Second National Front of the Escambray but this association was severed in 1968. Alpha 66 is currently under the leadership of Andres Nazario Sargen, who is Secretary-general, and Mendez Fernandez, a former Castro supporter and leader of the current operation. It has attempted other similar infiltrations of Cuba; the most recent attempt prior to the present one occurring in December 1969. It aborted when a boat was swamped at sea and one man drowned. Other Alpha 66 plans either never came to fruition or ended in failure. Total membership of the organization is unknown but it has delegations in several major cities in the US whose primary purpose is fund-raising. The group's appeal among the Cuban exile community is based mainly on the militantly anti-Castro attitude of its leaders.

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PRIORITY

TO: WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM 004

ATTENTION: HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER

TO: SECRETARY OF STATE

TO: DIRECTOR, CIA

TO: DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

TO: HEADQUARTERS, U.S. SECRET SERVICE, ATTENTION (PID) RECEIVED
UNSCA

TO: ATTORNEY GENERAL (BY MESSENGER)

TO: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FROM: DIRECTOR, FBI

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PAGE THREE C O N F I D E N T I A L

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INTELLIGENCE SPOT REPORT (U)

1. SUBJ: POSSIBLE PLANS FOR GOC TO ATTACK NAVBASE GTMO

DOI: 17APR70

ACQ: 22APR70

SOURCE/INFO EVAL: C-6

2. SOURCE, WHO HAS PROVIDED FAIRLY RELIABLE INFO OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS REPORTS THAT HE WAS CONTACTED BY A DSE OPERATIVE ON 17 APR. THE FOLLOWING WAS RELATED:

A. THE DSE OPERATIVE EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS ONLY ACTING AS A MESSENGER FOR HIGHER AUTHORITY (A "FIGURA DECORATIVA").

B. THERE WAS A BIG LANDING IN BARACOA AT RIO YUMARI WHICH WAS SUPPORTED BY TWO AIRCRAFT (NFI) THAT CIRCLED THE LANDING AREA UNTIL THE CR'S MADE IT TO THE HILLS, AND THEN DEPARTED. THERE HAS BEEN ANOTHER LANDING IN LAS VILLAS AND ALL THESE THINGS ARE VERY SERIOUS.

C. THE GOC IS MOVING "STEP BY STEP," TO KEEP AHEAD OF THE SITUATION AND WANTS SOURCE TO MOVE HIS FAMILY FROM BOQUERON TO IMIAS (UTM180UT 3819). THIS MOVE IS FOR THE SAFETY OF SOURCE'S FAMILY. SOURCE HIMSELF, IS TO REMAIN IN BOQUERON. REASON RELATED FOR SUCH ACTION IS THAT IF THE GOC IS UNABLE TO CONTAIN THE SITUATION (CR ACTIVITY) AND IF IT APPEARS ALL IS LOST, THEY PLAN TO ATTACK THE NAVAL BASE WITH ROCKETS (NFI).

TWO PRIMARY TARGETS WILL BE HIT FIRST--THE DESALINATION PLANT WHICH WILL SHUT OFF ELECTRICAL POWER AND WATER; AND THE GASOLINE HILL POL STORAGE AREA WHICH WILL START UNCONTROLLABLE FIRES. AFTER THIS "THE AMERICANS CAN ONLY JUMP IN THE BAY." ABOVE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ONLY IF THE GOC IS CERTAIN THE SITUATION IS BEYOND CONTROL.

3. FIELD COMMENT: COMNAVBASE VIEWS ABOVE WITH MUCH INTEREST HOWEVER WITH SKEPTICISM. POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT THE GOC WANTS THE INFO TO GET TO THE BASE AS A WARNING THAT IF THE CR'S SUCCEEDED, THE US CAN EXPECT A CONFRONTATION WITH CUBA. IF THIS IS TRUE, IT SEEMS THAT THE GOC IS OVER PLAYING ITS HAND, BEFORE THE SITUATION (CR LANDINGS) WAS REALLY EVALUATED. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SUCH ACTION SHOULD HAVE BEEN HELD UNTIL LATER.

4. THIS REPORT CONTAINS RAW UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. ALL DATA DEVELOPED AND HELD BY CTF 157.

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